

MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS ACT OF 2017

Senator Al Franken

THE PROBLEM. One in five youth in the United States experience mental illness, and 70 percent of adolescents with mental health problems do not receive care. Over the last two decades, suicide rates have doubled among Americans between the ages of 10 and 14.

We know how to address these terrible facts. With the right training and resources, school staff can play an important role in helping to identify and support children with mental health problems. But in a time of tight budgets for education, too often support services like school counselors, social workers, psychologists and nurses end up on the chopping block or are not available in the first place.

THE MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS ACT. This legislation will expand access to mental health services in schools. It will establish a grant program to support schools that work with community-based organizations to expand access to mental health services for students. The grant program will also provide assistance to schools to train staff, volunteers, families, and other members of the community to recognize the signs of behavioral health problems in students and refer them for appropriate services. Under the legislation, the Department of Health and Human Services will develop standardized quality measures and participating schools are required to collect and submit data on their programs and outcomes. The legislation authorizes \$200 million in grant funding per year over five years, and eligible local education agencies, including tribal schools, can partner with community mental health organizations to apply for funding (up to \$2 million per grant year), based on the size of their student population.